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## Organ Preludes and Interludes

By A. M. Weiss



T is an old prohibition that Pope Pius X. has revived in his Motu Proprio, VI, 17: "It is not permitted to have the chant preceded by long preludes, or to interrupt it with intermezzo pieces." This restriction is well founded. Through many lengthy preludes and interludes the Divine service is extended to an unbecoming length, the priest is detained in liturgical function at the altar, which should follow one another in quick succession and thereby the liturgy becomes tedious, is dismembered and many a fault is committed against it. Apart from these evil results, superfluous organ playing is in itself useless and of no value whatever. What purpose should it serve? That of beautifying the Divine service? Not at all; because the true, God-pleasing beauty of Divine service lies precisely in this, that it proceeds *secundum ordinem*, according to the ecclesiastical ordinances; and these are not to be observed by the priest only, but by the organist as well;

and in the same measure, and with the same conscientiousness. Should it perhaps serve the purpose of edifying the people? Suppose the organist would really have this laudable end in view,— is not obedience better than self-will? Does not all the blessing of God rest upon the conscientious fulfillment of duty rather than upon personal impulse? Whoever considers the results, will, undoubtedly, as a true servant of the Church, renounce all self-will. But are the people really edified by this excessive organ playing? Although this does occur occasionally, experience has proved that in most instances the people are annoyed by it. We will not mention the impatience of the audience which an unnecessary protraction of the Divine service occasions, and which is often caused by useless organ playing. More importance should be attached to the ideas and impressions which the people receive in Church and take with them into their every day life. In the sermon salutary thoughts and resolutions have been brought home to the hearts of the faithful, and immediately after the organist destroys all these good impres-

sions. In consequence of his excessive playing he is tempted to handle the organ as a concert instrument, he wishes to improve his virtuosity, and thereby recalls melodies reminiscent of the theatre, concert-hall and the street. It is not necessary to play songs as the people have them impressed upon their ear,—variations upon these airs, while introducing motives and often entire passages from them, are in themselves sufficient to divert the attention of the faithful from the holy functions and lead their thoughts to the opera and concert-room and to awaken sensual representations in their minds thus making the Divine service a curse instead of a blessing. If any one would sing sacred hymns at a pleasure resort he would deserve a severe reproach, and yet this would not be as censurable as smuggling secular songs into the sanctuary.

St. Bernard before entering the house of the Lord banished all vain cares and worldly business from his heart; others endeavor, sometimes intentionally, or otherwise, unconsciously, to awaken lascivious thoughts in the minds of the faithful. The latter consideration may not be regarded as the least motive for the restriction expressed in Article VI, 17, of the *Motu Proprio*.

If this prohibition refers in particular to Italian circumstances and conditions—because in Italy thus far the organ has been played to excess,—it has none the less force in our country, where in many places quantity and quality of organ playing cry to Heaven. The quantity should be limited, so that the quality will not suffer detriment. We frequently hear organists, not versed in the art of improvisation, extemporize, never employing a prelude book. Thus the organ is made to reproduce whatever the performer has in his fingers from piano-playing, the most ecclesiastical of all instruments becomes degraded to a practice clavier upon which quite unfamiliar selections are tried, or any of his own inventions are given for the benefit of the audience. In consequence of not employing printed preludes his playing often seems to have a tendency to be drawn out *sine fine*, because the correct close, the proper cadence cannot be found. Serious and impressive are the admonitions Dr. Haberl addressed to those organists who discharge the duties of their office negligently: "We cannot

too strongly condemn the deplorable yet common habit of improvising upon the organ capriciously. Whatever comes into the head, at the moment, is dropped from the fingers, while for the same service the singer dare not sing without rehearsal and is bound to his notes, nor the preacher enter the pulpit without preparation.

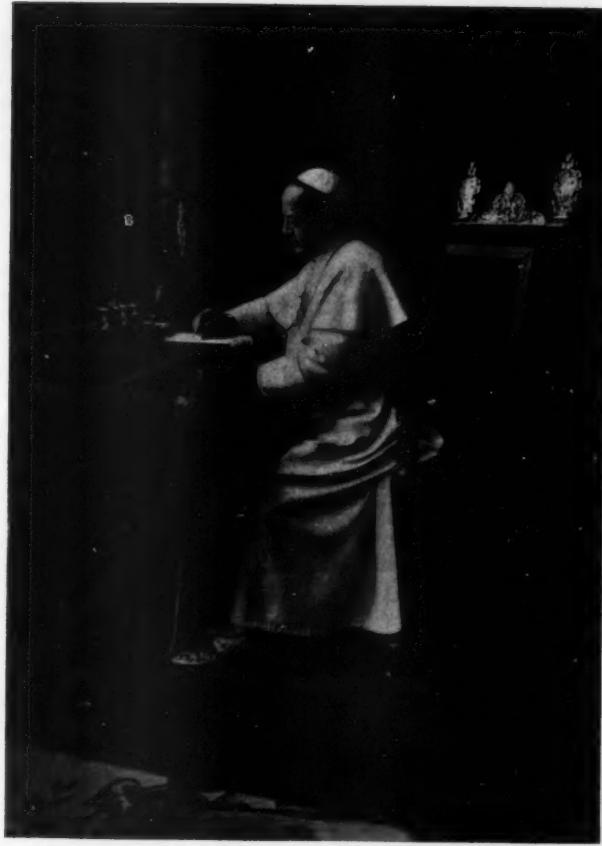
If many of these organ *improvisatori* could only see in print or in writing what they have thrown off as a prelude, they would blush for very shame, and thereupon resolve to study their art, and never to leave off until their printed preludes and interludes might no longer bring that blush to their cheek. Whoever is not competent of improvising should employ some of the many organ compositions which may be so easily obtained at the present time, so that the Divine service will be celebrated in a becoming manner in the organ loft and that the regulations of the Church in this regard may be observed.

## II

In the following section those parts of the Mass in which the organist easily falls into the failure of playing too much and too long, will be cited and discussed.

According to the liturgical prescriptions the Introit may not be intoned by the choir until the priest has arrived at the altar. „*Cantores non possunt incipere Introitum Missae priusquam sacerdozes ad altare pervenit.*” (*Graduale Romanum*.) The Gradual refers here to the „*Missa Solemnis*,” solemn high Mass. In this, the priest begins the prayer at the foot of the altar immediately upon his arrival there with his assistants. In a „*Missa Cantata*” without deacon and sub-deacon, as is customary with us instead of the „*Missa Solemnis*,” it appears from the above prescriptions, if the Introit may be commenced immediately after the priest has come to the altar, although he begins the prayer only after having previously prepared the altar. The „*Missa Cantata*” being a substitute for the „*Missa Solemnis*” it will have to be adapted to the same regulations. Custom seems to favor this practice for the most part. Be that as it may, the principal point remains that no prelude should be played at the beginning of Mass which would last until the Confiteor, as it frequently happens. There is nothing more tedious than not to hear

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Dilecto filio O. Singenberger choiciorum Magistris  
merentissimo in Chicagno. Seminario Archidioecesis  
Sanctae Mariae ad Sacrum in Testimonium singulari  
benivolentiae Aplicam Benedictionem impetrans

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the chorus begin at the commencement of Mass; we are impressed as though something were missing in the choir and that the attack was not certain. How the organ is abused while the organist with his right hand fingers the keys and with the left disturbs the repose and recollection of the personnel of the choir. In many churches, perhaps in the majority, the Introit is not so much as recited, still less sung; when should the *Kyrie* begin there? Why not immediately with the prayer of the priest at the foot of the altar? Or should organ-playing replace the Introit? No decision was ever made which allows organ-playing instead of the Proper of the Mass; the text should at least be recited, the organ accompanying. The *Kyrie* may begin simultaneously with the prayers of the priest at the foot of the altar, because a character of penitence and petition is common to both. One ought to remember too that the celebrant should be detained as little as possible because the various functions should succeed one another quickly, in order to preserve the interior and exterior unity of the liturgy. How often is the priest obliged to wait on account of the long duration of the singing in the choir, and how tedious it is when the organ seems never to reach an end.

Of the remaining part of the Mass, we will consider the „*Sanctus*” in particular. Excepting the „*Gloria*” and the „*Credo*,” there is no other chant in the Mass which should follow the chant of the priest so immediately as the „*Sanctus*” the preface. Let us imagine the situation of an ecclesiastical dignity visiting a parish and being received by the representatives of the congregation and the people. The pastor of the church, in a spiritual, enthusiastic speech, welcomes the visitor in words similar to the following: “As a sign of our constant fidelity to our beloved Father, and as an expression of our inmost joy we account of the highly esteemed visit, I request the people to join with me in these words of greeting: Hail to our most noble Lord and Father! All hail, hail, hail!” The people, however, would not respond but let the speaker call alone, and only after some time would they repeat the welcome. Something quite similar occurs when at the „*Sanctus*” between the „*sine fine dicentes*” of the

priest and the „*Sanctus*” of the choir a lengthy organ prelude is inserted. Does it not at times appear as though the priest had sung „*sine fine organum pulsantes*”? How often must the consecration proceed in the midst of the „*Sanctus*,” whereas it should take place amid deep, serious silence, begotten of a firm and lively faith. The *Sanctus* should therefore begin after the ringing of the bells and a short cadence,—the latter may be omitted if the organist gives the tone at the end of the preface, and thus the *Sanctus* will immediately follow the preface. The same is to be observed at the *Gloria* and *Credo*.

And now we come to the *Agnus Dei*. In some localities a singular custom prevails. Certain directors seem to be of the opinion that the *Agnus Dei* should be sung only after the signal has been given for the communion; until then nothing is heard but the organ. The reason for this may be found in the intention not to disturb the priest during the holy communion. A worthy chant would not disturb him;—besides, the communion of the priest lasts until after the receiving of the Sacred Blood, and to attain this end the *Agnus Dei* could only commence after the communion. The priest recites it before consuming the Sacred Species, and why should the choir sing it afterwards? Besides the verse to the *Communio* yet remains for interludes, which precisely, we again repeat, causes the Divine service to become tedious.

In conclusion let us briefly review the points referring to organ-playing which are to be observed during holy Mass and at other liturgical functions. Begin the various parts after a short cadence, in time, so that the prescribed chants may follow one another without precipitation; the priest will not be detained in the functions at the altar, and the service will not be extended to an unnecessary length. The organist should employ prelude books. Let him remember that the organ is not absolutely necessary at the Divine service, but it is employed there only as an accompaniment, and to fill up the time in a becoming manner. It would be better, indeed not to play the organ at all than to profane the Divine service and the temples of God, which are the hearts of the faithful.

A. M. D. G.

## An Interview With Maestro Rello

By our Roman Correspondent

Among the dominant contemporary personalities of ecclesiastical music in Rome none is more highly esteemed than Maestro Antonio Rella. A man of engaging charm and dignity, possessing a wealth of musical experience, with an international viewpoint and an intimate, sympathetic understanding of those placed under his direction, Monsignor Rella impresses one as embodying the finest traditions of musical leadership. Since 1904 he has collaborated with Maestro Lorenzo Perosi in the direction of the Sistine choirs, and at the same time has been in charge of musical instruction at the North American College in Rome. From these important posts he has exercised a remarkable influence upon musical thought and expression, not only in Rome, and consequently throughout the Catholic world, but especially also in the United States through the many American priests who have formed their tastes under his guidance in Rome during the past twenty-four years.

In 1923-24 Monsignor Rella conducted the Sistine choir on a triumphant tour of America; and in the course of his experience he has visited practically every center of music in the world. In spite of the simple modesty and fine reticence of the man, he is manifestly qualified to speak authoritatively on liturgical music, not merely from a theoretical viewpoint, but equally with regard to practical problems which confront Church musicians everywhere.

Through his kindness I was able to arrange an interview for the readers of THE CAECILIA. The occasion could not have been more favorable. The seminary choir had just finished singing a Mass of Bottigliero under his direction in the exquisite little chapel of the North American College.

The conversation began quite naturally with the subject of Gregorian Chant. I remarked the prayerful nuances and sustained interest of the interpretation I had just heard. "The success of Gregorian Chant," the Maestro declared, "depends largely upon the conception, and

then the flexibility, the *limpidezza*, of execution. The same holds true for all liturgical music, but especially for the Gregorian Chant because of its pure melodic line. Each neum portrays an aspiration of the soul. First the heart must understand. Then the voice must follow in perfect response to each movement of the heart. But how easy it is for one to say these things...."

To the question: "Do you consider congregational singing practicable," he replied enthusiastically, "Undoubtedly!" He continued: "The liturgical ideal is attained only when the congregation assumes an active part in the divine service. Worship in common is not realized in the truest sense until there is common expression. What finer common expression can one find than the Mass itself?" Monsignor Rella remarked that he had heard the Mass sung with beautiful effect by congregations in France and Belgium, and that, in spite of manifest difficulties, a similar movement was on foot in Rome itself.

"The so-called 'floating population' of American cities," he said, "should not constitute an overwhelming obstacle to congregational singing, so long as there is a definite nucleus of permanent parishioners. A small and well organized group in the body of the Church, sustained by organ accompaniment should be able to inspire and unify the singing of the entire congregation. Of course, one cannot expect perfect results until preliminary training has been given to the children in the schools." I mentioned the timidity of the average congregation. "American enthusiasm," he answered, "will not let timidity stand in the way, once the value of congregational singing is demonstrated."

Speaking of the current editions of the Chant, the Maestro recommended the Solemnes edition unreservedly. "It is the only edition today," he said, "which is conformed to the latest researches of the Vatican commission."

The discussion which followed revealed several interesting possibilities in choir work. According to the provisions of the Motu Proprio, liturgical choirs are composed of male voices, boys and men. I asked, "Do you consider the boy soprano and alto voices capable of counter-balanc-

(Continued on page 52—Column 2)

**The Caecilia**

OTTO A. SINGENBERGER.....Editor

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Excerpts from the Cardinal's letters:  
December 12th, 1924—

"The CAECILIA deserves every commendation and encouragement, for it is practically 'a voice crying in the wilderness.' I know of no other monthly periodical in the English language midst the great multitude of publication that espouses the cause of sacred music and brings to our notice those compositions that are in harmony with the wishes and regulations of Pope Pius X of saintly memory.

" . . . your efforts merit and obtain every encouragement, for there are but few like you devoting your talents and efforts to the cause of real church music, and unless your numbers grow, the beauty and impressiveness of the Church's liturgy is bound to suffer in the years to come."

June, 1925—

"We are happy to welcome it (The CAECILIA) to the sacred precincts of our Seminary . . .

"We commend it to our clergy and our sisterhoods, for we feel that in supporting it . . . we are helping to safeguard a precious inheritance that has come to us from the first ages of the Church."

**Scandicus and Climacus**

A Plea for a  
Proper  
Appreciation  
and Treatment  
of good Church  
Choirs

Is there any reason for such a plea? Yes and alas, dear readers, there is. For proof, it will not be necessary to cite particular instances: for these,

the reader may be safely left to draw on his own reminiscence or personal experience. It will suffice for present purposes to point to the prevailing lack of taste and understanding in musical

matters generally as well as, more particularly, to the ignorance to be found even among persons of rank and station in regard to what is really required in order to form a good choir and maintain its excellence.

To grapple with the octopus of general ignorance and poor taste in matters musical is a task not at all inviting or promising; we beg, for the present at least to be excused from it. But to offer a little instruction on what is required for the formation and maintenance of a good church choir is a more hopeful undertaking. If successful in this, we shall feel consoled to hope that a proper sense of the value of a good church choir—in other words, the proper appreciation for which we plead—has been brought home to the minds of those who control the destinies of Catholic church choirs and of their directors. Thereupon, assent to our other plea—viz.: for a proper treatment of good church choirs—will become a necessary and unavoidable conclusion.

Let it be said at the outset, that a good Catholic church choir represents the result of a good formation of good material. A good Catholic church choir is here understood as measuring up to artistic and liturgical requirements. The good material in question are good voices, supplemented, of course, by the intelligence and culture of their possessors. Unless procured by pay, good voices are generally a very accidental quantity. And just because of their uncertainty and scarcity they possess a special value in the make-up of church choirs.

Now, the good formation of such choir material presupposes, indeed, thorough knowledge and both formative and directive ability on the part of the choirmaster. Yet even with these indispensable qualifications the very best choir director has work ahead of him, work hard and continuous and

most trying on both mind and body, work of which it is hardly possible to have an adequate idea, unless one has been a very close observer or has actually tried his hand at this business himself.

Yes, dear reader, all the worries and pangs and disappointments, all the personal sacrifices (sometimes amounting very nearly to utter self-abasement) of the choir director—all this must in justice be considered as part of the "price" which has been paid for the efficiency of a good choir. Would that this part of the "price" and "cost" of an efficient church choir could be expressed in dollars and cents! Then, probably, some persons might be able better to appreciate what is being thus bought in their name for the public worship of Almighty God.

Continuing, it must be said, that a good choir is more than a mere collection of singers; to be really efficient, it must be one being, one organism, as it were, with its director as the unifying and animating principle. Before this stage of development is reached, the choirmaster must have been busily engaged for a long time in scrupulous attention to a thousand and one details of choir-building, such as might be summarized under the following heads: vocalization, articulation, individual drill, general choir drill, filing process, blending and balancing of voices liturgical instruction, and, last but not least, the establishing of a mutual understanding between himself and his singers, or if you will, the establishing of a sort of telepathic communication with his singers, who seemingly unconscious of any artificiality there may be in the arrangement, respond to his every intention and to whatever mood he might

choose to transmit from his own personality to the living circuit of his singers. To accomplish such unity of mind and sentiment with its resulting responsiveness, is an arduous task, indeed; it will require much time and patience and, at time, a goodly amount of personal sacrifice (such as was alluded to above) on the part of the choirmaster. But to accomplish it is a necessity; for without it a choir could not properly be called a good one, without it a choir would not possess that quasi-organic life and unity which is essential to its excellence.

Now, dear reader, if you are willing to subscribe to the above reflections of ours—we trust there is sufficient objectivity in them to warrant your doing so—then you cannot but realize how remote it is from either truth or justice to respectively consider or expect a choir to be efficient, as indicated above, after a few months, or even a year's conscientious effort on the part of the choirmaster, even supposing the personnel of the choir to have remained intact from the beginning. Then, too, must you understand how manifestly inconsiderate and unjust is the action of those—let us call them "outsiders" for the present!—who carelessly or deliberately disturb a good church choir in the very essentials of its working apparatus. Such disturbance, we might add right here, while possible in divers ways, is usually caused by tampering with the personnel of the church choir. Whether the damage be done **bona** or **mala fide**, matters very little in our present consideration; the fact remains, that the root of the evil is usually a deplorable ignorance of the value of a good choir and, in particular, ignorance of the value and importance of even one

singer in the make-up of a well-balanced choir. Strange, indeed, how some apparently well-intentioned and highly cultured persons appear at times to be struck with blindness in the face of the great disorder and damage they are causing in one department of God's public worship by their imprudent and reckless treatment of church choirs under their jurisdiction! The loss of a fine stained-glass church window or of some choice ornamental church furniture would certainly be felt most keenly;—yet how inferior in value and liturgical importance are such articles to a good Catholic church choir.

And now a final appeal to you, dear reader! Are you the pastor of a church, the director of a college or seminary, or the head of some religious establishment, and is the church choir under your jurisdiction a good one and doing its work well? If so, then pray, by the love you bear God, His Holy Temple, and the splendor of its Liturgy—**encourage** your choir, guard it as you would a precious ornament of the sanctuary, and do not permit any minor consideration of whatsoever source or character to detract from its efficiency! The perfection or efficiency of your church choir is not your right, but **God's**; it is the right and property of His Holy Temple! And may it never be said of you:—“*quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*”

A. L.



(Continued from page 49)  
cing the rich maturity of tenors and basses?"

“The training of boys voices,” he replied, “is a special work, for which all are not equally qualified or equipped. To say nothing of the geniality and patience required for tactful discipline, special technical knowledge is necessary to develop the delicate boy voice into full, firm tonality without risk of injury. The problem, however, is not concerned with a theoretical feat. It is a question merely of securing a competent choir master.” I commented on the remarkable beauty and strength of the Italian sopranos. “That is due partly to the foundation of falsetto voices,” he explained. “The training of tenors to sing falsetto with the boy sopranos is almost a secret art of the Italians, although the native qualities of Italian tenor voices facilitate the work. The results are truly astonishing. Many persons, hearing these choirs, are deceived into imagining that they are hearing female voices.” He added that this special phase of Italian choruses has somewhat declined in recent years.

An incidental remark disclosed a practical point on the use of the organ. “The purpose of the organ is to sustain the individual voices and to unify the ensemble. When the organ dominates the choir so as to drown the voices by its roar, then it would seem that the choir has ceased to function as such. The Benedictine monks with their modest subdued organ accompaniments,” he said, “have much to teach the organist who would learn the place of the organ in a truly liturgical choir.”

Returning to the musical forms established in the Motu Proprio, I asked Monsignor Rella if he considered the works of Palestrina to be within the range of the average parish choir. “Not only of Palestrina, but those also of all the composers in that glorious period, Vittorio, di Lasso . . . . and the rest.” I asked if these compositions are available in easy arrangements. “All that is necessary,” he replied, “is a transposition to the G clef, and this is now offered in the new editions of these works.”

“The modern tendency is to treat the voice as an instrument and to consider the choir as an orchestra. Palestrina and his contemporaries know better. They under-

stand the human voice perfectly. They recognized its limitations, its capacities, its range, its possibilities. The music of Palestrina and his period is eminently vocal music, not music for strings, trumpets, wood winds, heavy brasses, as if the voice were capable of carrying an instrumentation.

"There are great composers of Church music today. Here in Italy we have Perosi, Ravanello, Refice.... I could name many of high rank. But we always have the wealth of the old masters. We must learn to appreciate the musical treasures of the past, compositions as rich and inspiring, as living and vibrant, now as in the day of their creation. Upon no other basis can we appreciate rightly the achievements of the present, and hope for true, solid, orthodox development in the future."

I asked Maestro Rella if he had a special message for the readers of THE CAECILIA. "If I were to stress a particular point," he said, "it would concern the formation of musical taste, especially among the young. There are so many diverting elements of trashy character today that unless the leaders of Catholic thought take a definite stand, no real progress can be made. Your philanthropists have lavished fortunes upon grand opera and symphony endowments. Your cinema theatres employ large and well-paid orchestra for the execution of high class compositions. Meanwhile, education in the classics of liturgical music must not be neglected. Your boys and girls must be cultured in the masters who have faithfully reproduced the spirit and truth of the universal Church throughout the ages, but especially in the glory of Gregorian chant and in the supreme art of Palestrina. This work must begin in the elementary schools. It must be exemplified in the practical repertory of your choirs. It must reproduce itself in the natural enthusiasm and intelligence of your congregations. The best that the nations have produced is yours to command. You have only to command it."

As a happy sequel of this delightful interview, it was my privilege later to attend the rehearsals of the Sistine choir and to hear the Missa Brevis sung in the Sistine Chapel under the direction of Maestro Perosi and Maestro Rella, on the anniversary of the coronation of the Holy Father. The program included an Ore-

mus, Gradual and Tract, Tu Es Petrus, and Benedictus, composed by Maestro Perosi—Maestro Rella was speaking, not from abstract theory, but from experience!

## The Music of the Bible

By G. Kirkham Jones

(Concluded)

They were roughly-made wooden-handled metal triangles, through which were threaded thin metal bars supporting metal rings. When rapidly shaken to and fro, a tinkling bell-like sound was made.

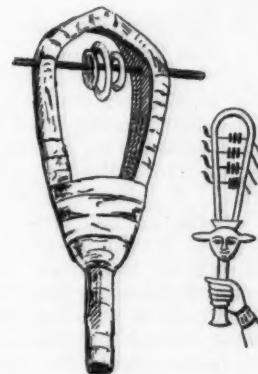


Figure No. 25

Some had only three metal bars, and are probably those mentioned in Samuel:

To meet King Saul with tabrets, with joy, and with three-stringed instruments.

I expect St. Paul was thinking of these instruments when he used the words 'sounding brass.'

### THE PSALMS

Although the Psalms were songs of praise, some of the headings tell us that they had instrumental accompaniments. Thus:

Psalm 5—Nehiloth means 'wind instruments.'

Psalm 6—Neginoth means 'stringed instruments.'

Psalm 7—Shiggaion means 'wandering,' and probably refers to a gentle, running instrumental accompaniment.



Figure No. 26

Psalm 8—Gittith may mean the name of accompanying instrument brought by David from Gath.

Psalm 45—Shoshannim may mean the instruments with 'six strings.'

In the list of musical instruments given in the book of Daniel, one is called the 'dulcimer.' Learned people have found out that this is a mistake on the part of the translators, and that the proper word is 'Sumphoniah.' It refers to a very quaint and 'baby' form of bagpipe, something after the style of the double-flute, but having a wind-box or bag made of animal skin. The player, blowing into the mouth-piece, filled this skin wind-bag, which he held between his arms and his body. When he wanted more wind for playing he squeezed the bag with his arm and elbow. At the same time, by moving his fingers on the holes of the two pipes, he played a simple tune on the other, much in the same was as players of the bagpipe may be seen to do to-day. (Fig. 17).



Figure No. 17

In this way, two or more notes 'sounded together,' and this is just what the name means.

Our modern word 'symphony' comes from it.

#### A WARNING

I hope that you now have some idea of the music, vocal and instrumental, spoken of in the Bible. But I must warn you again, most strongly, that when you read about music instruments in the Bible, you *must* try to forget all about present-day music and instruments.

You must try to fly back, in imagination, to those simple bygone days, and picture the life led by the wandering shepherd tribes of Palestine.

I expect you would think the music of that time very childish, and even ugly and noisy, harsh and discordant. But the Hebrews thought it beautiful, and it certainly sounded grand and dignified in the Temple. Then again, remember, they had no schools, no concerts, no theatres, no gramophones, no pianolas, no wireless, no bandstands, no music books, no harmony, in fact, until the time of David, no large-scale music of any kind.

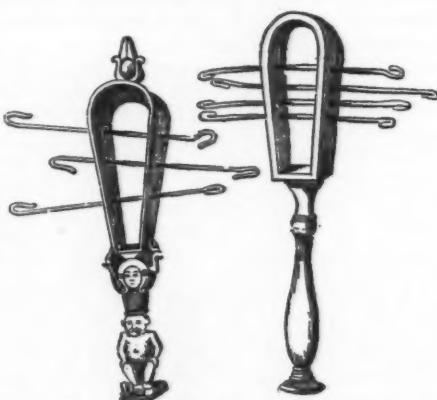


Figure No. 27

Most of the early Bible music was that of a few people singing or playing very, very simple tunes—for ever since the first little baby smiled and crowed there has been 'music' in the world, and people have hummed their 'own make-up' tunes at work or at play.

Then, on special occasions, in a simple way, several would join together to make music (of a kind), often invented on the spot.

Gradually some became especially good at singing or playing, or making up tunes, and so we got 'musicians' who made music their living, and were hired on great

occasions. Some became wandering minstrels:

Take an harp, go about the city . . . make sweetly melody, sing many songs. But usually the 'big' music was heard chiefly at religious services.

#### THE TABERNACLE

Even when the tribes of Israel were wandering about, living in tents, there was always one special tent, a sacred place, surrounded by screens of coarse canvas or animal skins, set apart for religious worship.

The men of one tribe, the Levites, were charged to look after this Holy Tent or Tabernacle, or movable Church, which they regarded as the Palace of Jehovah, to carry it from place to place, and set it up at each stopping place.

They acted as sentries, night and day, chanting sacred songs through the long night watches; they guarded the sacred Ark of the Covenant; they conducted the services and sacrifices, and music during the hours of worship. Probably there was some sort of musical training among them, of a very simple kind.

#### THE GLORIES OF DAVID AND SOLOMON

Under David, the Israelites became a mighty nation (for those times), and the King devised, and collected material for building, a splendid House of God. It was to be on the same plan as the old Tabernacle, but much bigger and richer, more elaborate, and moreover solid and permanent.

David himself was one of the greatest musician of his day, so he made arrangements to have what he thought magnificent musical services. He set up at Jerusalem a singing school and a storehouse of musical instruments, and collected and trained many players.

David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be singers with instruments of music, psalteries and harps and cymbals . . . So the singers were appointed to sound with cymbals of brass . . . with harps on the Sheminith to excel . . . and Chenaniah . . . was for song; he instructed about the song because he was skillful.

But although David, 'the darling of the songs of Israel,' made all these plans, because he had sinned he was not allowed by God to build the Temple. This was left to his son Solomon, whose reign was even more glorious than that of David. Solomon was a great poet and musician:

And he spake three thousand proverbs,  
And his songs were a thousands and five.

He carried out his father's plans in splendid fashion taking great care of the music. If we can believe one old Jewish historian, Josephus, Solomon had a Temple store of 200,000 trumpets and 40,000 lyres, and, when he opened the Temple, a hundred and twenty trumpeters sounded a fanfare:

I (Solomon) got me men singers and women singers and the delights of the sons of men as musical instruments and that of all sorts.

As I told you before, it is very difficult to know for certain how these musical services were conducted, and the tunes that were sung, but we do know from one of the Psalms:

The singers went before,

The players on the instruments followed after,

Among them were the damsels playing with timbrels; in the solemn religious processions in and around the Temple, and that the singing was accompanied not only by hands of instrumentalists, but by hand-clapping and dancing.

If we examine the Psalms closely, we are led to believe that some were sung either by a soloist, or a small select choir, and answered in chorus by a large choir or the whole congregation:

(Solo) O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good;

(Chorus) For his mercy endureth for ever; this refrain being repeated in every verse.

Another was evidently sung by two large choirs which answered each other:

(1st Choir) Who is this King of Glory?

(2nd Choir) The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

Very imposing and impressive these Temple music-services must have been, and there is no doubt that we owe an immense debt to those poets and singers of old who poured out their souls to God in immortal poetry, and in music crude and simple, but nevertheless the foundations of that long stream of sacred music which has done so much to benefit and to uplift mankind.

And just as music was the mainspring of old Jewish worship, so also was it reckoned the greatest of their human pleasures.

In their wedding music and funeral songs, their harvest and vintage songs, we have the beginnings of folk-song and dance, and it is interesting to note that just as hunting figured largely in the idea of heaven among primitive peoples, such as the Red Indians, Saxons, etc., so, in the

Jewish idea of heaven, music always had a prominent place.

Thus, St. John, in wonderful dream revelation—speaks of God's voice as:

A great voice as of a trumpet;

and of angels:

The sixth angel which had the trumpet; of the elders:

having everyone of them harps;

of the heavenly company:

I heard the voice of the harpers harping with their harps;

and when he wants to speak of the utter desolation of Babylon, he thinks of it as without music:

And the voice of the harpers and musicians and of pipers and trumpeters shall be heard no more at all in thee.

So we may be sure that the Jews of old were the most musical of the ancient nations, and the whole world owes them much for their noble share forming and fashioning the early stages of the 'divine art' of music.

THE END

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